

Seneca Bluffs Revitalization

Seneca Bluffs Habitat Restoration Project

OVERVIEW

Seneca Bluffs is an area of fifteen acres owned by the City of Buffalo. It is adjacent to the Buffalo River near the Seneca Street Bridge in South Buffalo. Hidden in a primarily urban and industrial community, this area is home to five distinct habitats and some of the last remnants of a vast historical wetland complex in the City of Buffalo.

The main goals are to improve aquatic and upland habitat along the Buffalo River, to reduce the impact of non-point source pollution and to offer improved public waterfront access and recreation opportunities.

OBJECTIVES OF DEVELOPMENT

1. **Invasive Species Management and Control** - Approximately 90% of the site is over-run by invasive species including Japanese knotweed, Phragmites, Garlic mustard, and purple loosestrife. Introducing biological controls will help curb invasive species.
2. **Security and Dealing with Unauthorized Access** – Illegal dumping of construction debris, abandonment of stolen vehicles and off-road vehicle abuse are some of the current problems.
3. **Eroding Bluff Preservation** – Assess the severity of the erosion problem, limit human access, and allow for continued use as a prime streambank nesting habitat. Minimal interference with natural processes is preferred.
4. **Upland Habitat Enhancements** – This objective complements the invasive species program. Determine the best option for re-vegetation with native plants/trees/shrubs/grasses and other wildlife enhancements. Designed for little or no ongoing maintenance.
5. **Aquatic Habitat Restoration** – This Includes the emergent wetland and adjacent upland, floodplain island, terraces, mudflats, gravel bar, backwater area and adjacent in-stream habitat. Proposed work includes; eradicating invasive species, restore and enlarge the emergent wetland, improve the fish habitat, waterfowl and wading bird habitat, create opportunities for nesting and amphibian use.

6. **Passive Recreation Amenities** – Allow for ADA trail and handicap access throughout the site. Benches, overlooks, boardwalks and canoe access. The recreation amenities will not take away from the natural, secluded and “wild” character on site.
7. **Environmental Education and Community Stewardship** – Create an atmosphere that is conducive to nature study and an “outdoor living laboratory”. The site should interface with the surrounding community.

LOCATION



MILESTONES

Seneca Bluffs Habitat Restoration Project - 2002

Proposals heard for contractors to help assist the area through the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning. Initial objectives set. Initial habitat restoration activities were completed by Erie County DEP in 2004 which consisted of: debris removal and site re-grading, installation of a native warm season grass meadow, upland riparian, seasonal aquatic depression, and installation of a gravel trail and a parking area.



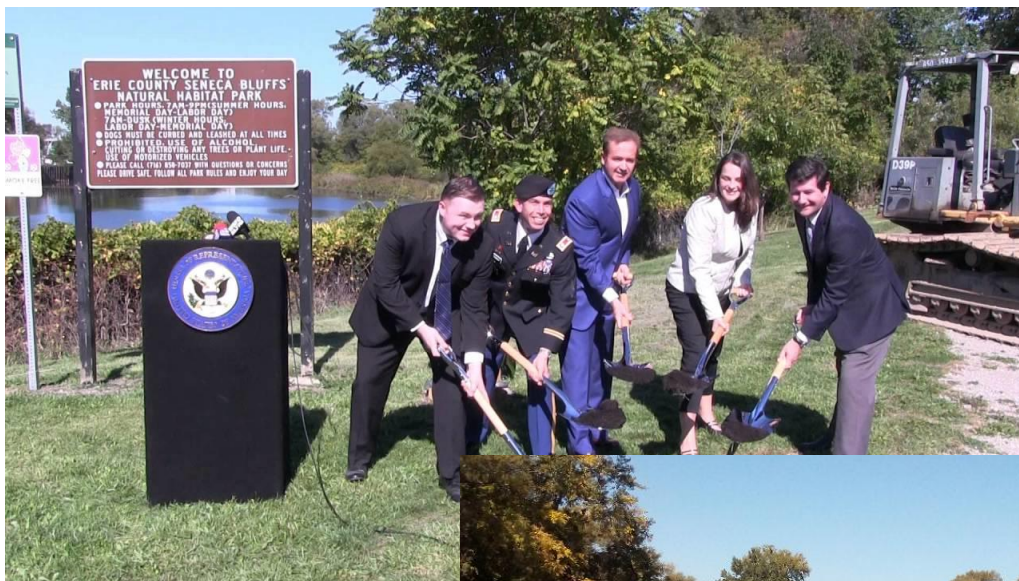
Riverkeeper Receives Grant from U.S EPA - 2010

Goals included removal of invasive species, completion of the Habitat Restoration Plan and development of a Habitat Restoration Monitoring Plan. Riverkeeper worked in partnership with the Erie County Sheriffs Action Corps program to remove 3.83 tons of knotweed from the site in 2011.



Ecosystem Restoration Groundbreaking - 2016

Groundbreaking for the park with the U.S Army Corp. of engineers. Part of Great Lakes Restoration Program gave funding to help cleanup. County buys more land to add to the park.



Vision (5-10 years)

Establish the area's safety and recreation areas

- Boat launches, canoes & kayaks,
- Continued invasive species control
- Keep erosion under control
- Cultivate nearby owned land to expand the habitat park
- Curb appeal for the community



